

Contributed

OUR BRIGHTSIDE LETTER.

Small Books and Large.

He is a fortunate man who has large books and can read them. They are great store rooms of learning and masterly thought in which great and strong men have deposited the wealthy fruits of a life of research and study. They have fed the minds of scholars and thinkers, and inspired lives to action for their fellows, and to the production of many other books. As we look upon the shelves there are Owen, Bacon, Edwards, Calvin and Baxter. They are for an upper class and are for generations. And of our own authors there are Thornwell, Hodge, Dabney, Peck, Babcock and Vaughan. They are large and for the few. They cost money and time. They ask for leisure and zeal and sustained thought and reflection. They bide their time patiently and will not wear out and be wholly forgotten for many years to come.

But in our time we have a large generation of small books. They suit the needs of the times. They cost small money, and can be frequently bought with the change of the pocket, and generously loaned and given away. They are concise and direct. They can be read by busy men and women and catch the attention and go to the point. They are the best thought on one subject by men of wide-awake mind and experience in action and in dealing with men. They have a large circulation, wide-spread influence. The large book for the library shelves of the scholars, and the small book for the pocket and traveling bag. The large book for the very few, and the small book for the multitude. The large book for the minister in his study, and the small book for his congregation, and every home. Hail the day of the small book!

Dr. James Stalker was wise indeed. He might have spent years on a great book on St. Paul, but he chose rather to make a book for the people, and set the mode for many to follow. Dr. Egbert Smith, of our own Church, might well have written a theological book for the shelf, but he wisely chose to make "The Creed of Presbyterians" for a vast reading from Virginia to the Rio Grande. Dr. Howard Agnew Johnston has made his ministry continental by his small books—"Bible Criticism for the Average Man" and "Scientific Faith." Dr. J. B. Shearer, of Davidson, is doing a notably valuable service, gathering in his retirement the fruits of the study of a long and useful life in his small books, "Studies in the Life of Christ" and others, with the latest perhaps the most valuable, "The Scriptures, Fundamental Facts and Features." The critics "have not rattled his window panes," to use Dr. Cuyler's opinion of Union Seminary. He stands by the Bible from our fathers, and it will do you good to read it. And here is Dr. Thomas Cary Johnston's small book on "Christian Missions" that will furnish minister and laymen a true scriptural foundation for their zeal for missions, and teach them bright and safe methods too.

A favorite small book with us is Mr.

Carnegie Simpson's, "The Fact of Christ." You can preach it and teach it and give it to the young man near you, lawyer, physician, business man, for a bright reading and then rejoice in the fruits that will follow.

A friend has brought to our table a very small book, "Preacher and Prayer," by E. M. Bounds, Washington, Ga., published at Nashville, by the M. E. Church South, Publishing House. It is worth its weight in precious stones to the Christian minister. It will send him into his closet to find grace and power, and then into his pulpit with a new unction and a new joy in his message.

Much there is in small books that is light and empty, ephemeral indeed, but some are weighty with truth and are vital and quickening wherever they touch.

J. P. S.

"PREDESTINATION, NOT FATALISM."

Mr. Editor: In issue of May 5, I see an article headed "Predestination, not Fatalism," by Rev. Julian S. Sibley, of Pensacola, Fla. So deeply impressed with the soundness of the doctrine of Presbyterianism therein enunciated and elucidated, was I, that I wish, as an humble elder or layman in the Church, to present my entire approval of it. Surely there are many members in our beloved Presbyterian Church who need such enlightenment and instruction, as the above contribution so concisely, plainly and beautifully exemplifies. Of course, I must admit that such members are poor students of God's Holy Word. A part of them may be rightfully classed among the so-called "babes in Christ." I do not wish to appear harsh in my criticism of other brethren of some of the churches here, but think it a duty to my own church and its tenets to warn our members against listening to certain evangelists in their revival meetings, when they go so far as to trespass upon our inherent rights, in purposely misstating that Presbyterianism means fatalism, according to our "Confession of Faith." Therefore, I take pleasure in commending Rev. Julian S. Sibley's contribution to the prayerful consideration of the many thousand subscribers and readers of your ably edited religious journal.

McKinney, Tex.

An Elder.

INFLUENCE OF EDUCATED MEN.

Speaking of his Southern tour, President Eliot said that he had had a most interesting and enjoyable trip, and that he intended to devote some time up on his return to Cambridge to the preparation of a detailed report of the trip from an educational point of view. He is more than ever convinced, he declared, that the great moral uplift in business and public affairs must come from the educated men.

"There is an intense interest all over the country at the present time in those two great problems," said Dr. Eliot: "first in making righteous our industrial activities, and secondly, in making righteous our municipal governments. University men will have very great influence in these matters during the next ten years."

In Holland the new princess is to be named Julianna Louise Emma Marie Wilhelmina. Reports are all favorable to the maintenance of the royal line.

Educational

THE AUSTIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

At the meeting of the Seminary Board held last week, in Austin, Tex., the most important action was the election, by a hearty and unanimous vote, of Rev. Robert Ernest Vinson, D. D., to the presidency of the institution.

In order to revive this office the constitution was changed, subject to the consent of the controlling Synods. It was found that the present and pressing needs of this young and growing institution demanded the change; and all eyes turned promptly to Dr. Vinson as the man of all men to meet the requirements of the most important and responsible position. He is probably the youngest man in the nation who has been elected to the presidency of a theological seminary.

He was born in South Carolina Nov. 4, 1876. His parents, Mr. John Vinson and Mrs. Mary Brice Vinson, brought him to Sherman, Texas, in 1886, where he, in 1896, received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Austin College. He then attended Union Theological Seminary in Virginia for three years, receiving the degree of B. D. in 1899, taking first rank in all his classes. He was pastor of the First church of Charleston, W. Va., for three years. In 1902 he accepted a call to the chair of Old Testament Languages and Exegesis in the Austin Seminary, where he has continuously given complete satisfaction to all. In 1906 he was transferred to the chair of English Bible and Practical Theology, which he will continue to fill in connection with the work of his new position. At one time a few years ago, it being found that an additional professor was indispensable, he generously and voluntarily relinquished his own endowed chair and took a professorship without endowment, undertaking to raise his own salary and endow his new chair, which he did most promptly and effectually. In 1905 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by his Alma Mater, Austin College. He has received most flattering calls to a number of our largest churches and recently was twice called to the position of Secretary of Schools and Colleges by our General Assembly. The Board of Trustees is to be congratulated on having a man of such rich endowments, sterling character and widespread popularity at the head of their work.

Action was taken by the board looking to the immediate inclusion of the Synod of Oklahoma among the Synods in control of the Seminary.

The year just closed has been the most prosperous in the history of the institution. There have been seventeen students in attendance on the classes of the seminary, fifteen of whom have been regular students, and fourteen of whom are college graduates with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. There were three graduates at commencement who also received the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. The baccalaureate sermon was delivered by the Rev. Dr. T. S. Clyce of Austin College, and the missionary address by the Rev. Dr. R. M. Hall of Galveston. These were both of a high order and most suitable to the occasion,